

## Promising Practice: Nursing Career Pathways

### Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

### CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute

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Associate degree nurses in Wisconsin have indicated that cost and time are the greatest barriers to advancement in their nursing careers. Undertaking additional debt to finance education places financial hardships on families and demanding work schedules make it difficult to find time to study. The current average time for nursing students to complete education for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree is six years, but the incumbent nursing workforce needs more education to provide quality care in an increasingly complex healthcare environment. There is also a great need for increased diversity in the Wisconsin nursing workforce.

The Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB) is striving to address these challenges through CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute, its Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. Partnering with the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) and Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), MAWIB is working to develop an accelerated nursing program and to build nursing career pathways. This effort will help HPOG participants who are nurses or nursing students complete degrees and fill the nursing workforce gap currently facing local employers. The partnership has set the following primary goals:

1. Increase the number of associate degree nurse students of the Wisconsin Technical College System and incumbent associate degree nurses who enroll for the Registered Nurse (RN) to BSN program, and shorten their time to completion of the BSN.
2. Identify and remove barriers to enrollment and accelerated completion of RN to BSN degrees in Wisconsin.
3. Investigate the option for a self-paced, competency-based curriculum for students.

The goal of the partnership is to develop career pathways to make nursing training programs as streamlined and convenient for students as possible. Program recruitment will be coordinated through all educational partners. Prerequisite courses will be provided at more frequent times and locations so students will not be stuck if they miss or fail a class.

The project plans to establish methods for dual enrollment of MATC nursing students at UWM, and it will ensure the transferability of credits between the educational institutions. To increase access and convenience for program completion, courses will have options for on-line instruction or off-campus, employer-based courses. The program is working with employers so that students can incorporate training into their work schedules in a constructive way. These efforts will serve CareerWorks Healthcare Training Institute students while building relationships that will have long-term benefits for local healthcare students and employers.